

## Position of the Hawaii Anti-Imperialist Student Organization

The Hawaii Anti-Imperialist Student Organization has joined the Coalition to Rename Porteus Hall with the conscious intent of demonstrating the effects and implications of racist ideology on Hawaii's students and workers.

In keeping with HAISO's policy of supporting the struggles of oppressed people, we feel that the following points should be made regarding the honoring of Stanley Porteus.

We believe that universities function as institutions that train a portion of the population as privileged professional servants of industry, as opposed to tradesmen or laborers. Thus, the composition of the university is an indicator that shows who will make up the more privileged strata in society. Everyone knows that "in order to land a good job, you must go to college." This point is drilled into us again and again.

Because university graduates make up this privileged class in society, the exclusion of an individual or group from the opportunity of attending college often means denying those people the opportunity for social mobility and a better life.

Stanley Porteus' ideas stated that the immigrant and native working class ethnic groups were "human material" that lacked the abilities to succeed in school and society. In Porteus' own words, speaking of the Filipinos: "the school tends also to create ambitions in individuals who by virtue of poor intellectual equipment, are incapable of attaining these ambitions ... the stimulus of unattainable ambition is cruelty...."

The question arises at this point, why would the ambitions of educated ethnic peoples be unattainable? I'm sure there are some here in this room who can supply the answer from personal experience -- there was no room in the haole oligarchy during Porteus' time for non-whites. At that time, Third World laborers were wanted only in the fields, where they were exploited severely by a haole economic ruling class. Porteus' ideas fit in well with the abuse and exploitation of Third World people that was carried out in the educational system by the discriminatory English Standard school system and the resulting disproportionate number of haoles in the university.

Thus, we can see that Porteus' work provided a "scientific" basis for the exploitation of Hawaii's working people.

Not only did Porteus' work contribute to the exploitation of Hawaii's people, but it was also applied to mainland America. On the immigration of non-whites to America, Porteus believed that: "These lands belong to the white race by right of peaceful conquest, and they shall not be given up to the inroads of a race whose standards of living have been shaded down by grim necessity to survival levels lower than our own." But what about the hundreds of thousands of Native American Indians who were violently exterminated to gain control of the land?

Furthermore, Stanley Porteus' work has contributed "scientific" justification for the excesses of American imperialism in exploiting and oppressing nations abroad. Porteus himself realized how work of his type would be used in excusing U.S. policies, as in the case of the Philippines: "For America the whole matter of racial difference in capacity has a double significance because it affects both her foreign and domestic policies. The ultimate wisdom of American policies in the Philippines is largely dependent upon the comparative psychological status of the Filipinos and their fitness to govern themselves.... If the traits that we have found to be characteristic of the Filipinos in Hawaii are also typical of the Filipino at home then we are forced to the conclusion that they are a long way from the stage of development at which they could be safely entrusted with self-government." In 1921 President Harding sent General Leonard Wood and W. Cameron Forbes (former Governor General of the Philippines) to investigate the readiness of the Filipinos for independence. Their report was far from favorable, for it condemned the rapid influx of natives into important government positions as harmful to efficiency. (p. 393, Wish, CONTEMPORARY AMERICA)

Policies given academic credence by men such as Porteus are responsible for victimizing the Filipinos and other oppressed people abroad right up to the present day. United States interests and investments still rule the Philippines and have turned to fascist-police state tactics to keep down the Filipinos struggle for their right to self-determination.

Basically, HAISO feels the Board of Regents should ask it self: WHY SHOULD THE UNIVERSITY HONOR ONE WHOSE WORK CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION OF GROUPS AND MINORITIES THAT NOW MAKE UP A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE U.H. STUDENT BODY?

How can the BOR feel that Porteus' work, which contributed to keeping Third World workers from realizing opportunities for a better life, has made a "significant contribution" to the University?

HAISO urges the BOR also to apply the lessons of history, so clear in hindsight, to the present situation. Just as Porteus' work provided a basis for the exclusion of working class people from the University and the chance for a better job in the 1930s, so the skyrocketing tuition and parking fees today, coming simultaneously as they are with the drying up of Federal and local aid to needy students, provide a genuine basis for the systematic exclusion of working class students from higher education. Just look at the racial composition of the University today. The majority of the students are haoles, Japanese and Chinese; with very few Hawaiians, Filipinos, or Samoans.

HAISO believes that it was Hawaii's working people whose work made Hawaii a rich and productive state. It was through their efforts that the state of Hawaii was able to afford a university in the first place. It is the working people of Hawaii who have made the greatest and most "significant contribution" to the U.H. It is an insult to the working people of Hawaii and to all who value democracy and liberty, to honor one whose objective role was to further their exploitation and degradation. HAISO and the Coalition Rename Porteus Hall call on you to reconsider the naming of the new building. Let's pick a name that is not an insult to the people!

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